РЕЦЕНЗИИ

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Review:
Tudor, M. (2023). Blue Helmet Bureaucrats: United Nations Peacekeeping and the Reinvention of Colonialism, 1945—1971. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 337 p.

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Рецензия на книгу:
Tudor M. Blue Helmet Bureaucrats: United Nations Peacekeeping and the Reinvention of Colonialism, 1945—1971. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2023. 337 p.

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The discord surrounding the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping revolves around how certain UN peacekeeping missions have been criticized for perpetuating neocolonialism or being manipulated by powerful nations to further their interests. The reviewed book further expands on the United Nations' post-war peacekeeping reconfiguration, global governance functions, and the misuse of diplomatic power. Despite criticism of peacekeeping activities for having colonial roots, the author highlights how colonial actors and concepts have shaped peacekeeping methods, which have been constrained and imprecise due to past colonial legacies.

Underpinning the historical narrative, the author analyses the UN's embryonic military operations and reveals the coordination and reconstruction of colonial-era institutions as an

extension and bridge to overwrite states' sovereignty of the Global South. The author explains how officials used their field access to maintain racial biases, plan political meddling, and build chronic inter-communal tensions in post-independent nations (Tudor, 2023).

The book weaves together historical perspectives on humanitarianism, decolonization, and the UN peacekeeping, giving fresh light on the procedures by which sovereignty was negotiated and re-designed over the course of history. Despite its focus on peacekeeping methods, the book also shows the political manoeuvring and ingenuity of the idea 'to protect' in efforts to shape peacekeeping operations.

The *Introduction* sheds light on divergent objectives and aims of UN leadership and peacekeeping personnel during decolonisation. Under the administrative and technical pretence of the mission mandate, peacekeeping missions provided exclusive opportunities for ideological initiatives, such as putting pro-Western or non-aligned persons in positions of authority in newly established states and within the UN personnel. As in the Suez, Congo, and Cyprus crises, the UN officials rationalized the aggressive pursuit of anticommunism and anti-Soviet incursion as a peacebuilding strategy rather than a breach of impartiality. Instead of promoting 'collective initiatives of emancipation' that strive for the transformation of structural dominance, rather humanitarian organizations benefit from their role as an international power. As a result, UN peacekeeping practices have grown to prioritize short-term solutions and anti-Soviet strategies (Democratic peace theory) ignoring the root cause of conflict, especially if the solution doesn't align with the Western foreign policies, illustrating the growing pattern of using missions as both the UN credibility repair and a 'quick fix' to avert possible Communist alignment. In sum, the introduction analyses inequality, racism, reinvention of sovereignty, remaking colonial-era hierarchy, and political principles in anti-colonial ideology during decolonization, investigating how these unequal ties and diplomatic alignments hampered true anti-colonial solidarity and Afro-Asian bloc unity.

The chapter *Testing the Waters, 1945—1955* describes how peacekeeping missions evolved into a legitimate responsibility for international organizations. It delves into the UN Secretariat's managerial experiment by acting directly in conflict situations in the post-war period, starting with state-crafting and a non-armed intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and progressing to the establishment of the UN Command in Korea. Following the establishment of the UN, the organization tested the waters with military capabilities embedded in the UN Charter, paving the way for military interventions rather than non-arm conflict resolution. The progression of international military exercises from the interwar years in the Saar through the formation of an international armed force under US command in Korea prepared the way for an UN-led, armed peacekeeping mission in 1956. The UNC provided a significant opportunity for the UN to mimic military duty, while the US benefited from the UN mandate by playing a peacekeeping advocate role via military intervention. The UNC mission portrayed the United States and the Republic of Korea as battling for international peace and portrayed North Korea as a communist aggressor. While the Soviet Union leadership contested and challenged this narrative by portraying North Korea and its communist supporters as fighters for global peace, opposing the Western imperialism in Asia and using the Korean War to emphasize the US military aggressiveness. In sum, the UN, under the guidance of the UN Charter, provided international legitimacy to the US army's approach in Korea, countering Soviet denunciations and putting the force in a moralizing garb, as the West continues to use the UN to conduct war in the name of peace (Tudor, 2023).

The chapter under the title *Reckoning with Suez, 1956—1959* explores the origins of the notion of establishing an UN-led peacekeeping force to respond to the Suez Crisis, which became a subject of dispute amongst the Western countries, setting the path for the betrayal of the UN. On United Nations Day 1956, British, French, and Israeli officials covertly signed the Protocol of Sèvres, an agreement that confirmed their collective resolve to breach the UN Charter and attack Egypt's Suez area. On 29 October, little more than a week after signing the Protocol, the

Israeli army invaded the Armistice Lines and Egyptian sovereignty, advancing beyond the bounds of the Armistice Agreement. Anglo-French armies joined them two days later, on October 31st. The Global South demanded the UN Secretary-General respond to the Suez crisis and negotiate a cease-fire to prevent escalation. By incorporating the invaded forces into the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), Hammarskjold intended to pre-empt claims that the operation served the Western interests and saved the image of the UN. Hammarskjold was extremely disappointed and on the brink of resigning, as the US government was concerned about its continuous influence on the UN, the UNSC prioritized protecting permanent members' interests over collective peace and other member-states via the veto system, while the Afro-Asian bloc nations questioned the institution's significance. In sum, peacekeeping offered an option to conflict resolution that pursued anti-communist goals under the pretext of peacebuilding.

The chapter *Imperial Aspirations, 1960—1961* explores the state-building objectives of the UN personnel during the Congo mission, charting the UN activities from optimistic beginnings in July 1960 to the humiliating second phase in September 1961, focusing on UN fantasies on the objectives of the mission. During the first phase of the mission, the United Nations operation in the Congo (ONUC) officials altered the course of the fighting and the political future of Congo by assisting Joseph Kasavubu in deposing Patrice Lumumba. Inspired by a paternalistic ambition to educate Congolese elites, the UN personnel replaced Belgian administrators and technicians, assuming that the Congo crisis and political crises were mostly the result of 'severe inter-tribal strife' rather than the continued involvement of the Belgian government. The mission's managerial behaviour resurrected colonial structures and approaches to governance, isolating peacekeeping personnel from the realities of the inhabitants and rendering them incapable of recognizing the psychological and political implications of the mission, especially the similarities to an invasion. In seeking to choreograph Congo's destiny, the ONUC showed a desire to intervene paternally in the sovereign nation's affairs, revealing that the mission was an experiment. The UN's engagement in this issue aligned with the Secretary-General's perception of a post-colonial liberal member-state with an anti-Soviet position. The Secretary-General's efforts to recruit ONUC executives who shared his political views resulted in a culture of dominance and entitlement among the mission bureaucracy, compelling the ONUC leadership to intervene in Congo's political affairs, and fuelling internal and international hatred. In sum, the mission's justification of its activities in Congo maintained imperialism, as the ONUC characterized its activities as a compassionate approach to creating a modern, progressive state endorsed by the Western-aligned bloc.

The next chapter, *Obstructing Self-Determination, 1962—1963*, discusses the UN system, which advocates for peacekeepers to make decisions in favour of the UN reputation rather than protecting the human rights of the Papuan people because they did not fit the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) personnel's specific. The Congo mission's image harm had triggered a shift in UN staff decision-making that now prioritized organizational prestige and stability. The UN perceived the institution in crisis and dispatched peacekeepers to re-establish credibility, oblivious to rights violations and realistic nationalist allegations in the West Papua. As the operation came to an end, UNTEA personnel were relieved to leave the remote country, while portraying themselves as cognitively and developmentally superior to the Papuans. This perceived superiority fostered the belief that the Papuans did not yet 'deserve' self-determination and were hence not worth the potential reputational harm. The bureaucrats depended on organizational culture as superior to the locals, denying any compassion or sympathy. This concept of territories not prepared to achieve independence by the West was founded in the League of Nations' 1919 Mandate system, which was eventually included in the UN Charter Article 73. In sum, the UN remained consistent in viewing local problems via the lens of racial stratification and imperial methods of expertise, even though the ONUC and UNTEA missions were established for distinct reasons.

The chapter *From Stagnation to Insignificance, 1964—1971* elaborates on the decolonisation process that resulted in violence due to the UN's idea of stagnation rather than resolving the root cause of the conflict. The 1964 war arose due to ethnic-nationalist differences between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. These were the result of British colonial control, as political tensions between Greece and Turkey infected Cyprus as both nations transported propaganda, troops, and arms leading to the Cyprus insurrection of the 1950s, integrating the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) operation within a larger history of colonial brutality while stagnating rather than resolving the conflict. The uncovering of peacekeeper crime weakened the mission's legitimacy and negatively influenced the island's demographic stability. During the UNFICYP, the mission was chastised not for the principle of peacekeeping but for the tactical 'failure' of the personnel. In sum, the notion of peacekeeping remained feasible, but the UN's competence to administer peacekeeping with the influence of the West was doubtful. Unfortunately, with the UNFICYP, the significant colonial legacy underlying the Cypriot society in 1964 and the continual surveillance of the Western governments damaged the peacekeeping mission and the UN's diplomatic credibility.

Conclusion summarizes the employment of systemic approaches through which sovereignty was negotiated and renegotiated from the mid-1950s onwards by combining narratives of peacekeeping and decolonisation. Contrary to dominant scholarly perspectives on New York or Geneva-based globalism, it questioned the state actor's decision on diplomacy, collective peace and military narratives of the UN missions and revealed how peacekeepers were creating the standards and structures of the post-colonial global system. The UN bureaucrats intervened in the political processes of post-colonial governments, negotiated, and influenced the political actions of other nations, particularly former or developing colonial states. Decolonization in the Global South fuelled the Western anxieties that formerly colonized nations would become agents of Soviet aggression.

The historical context of peacekeeping missions, particularly during the early days of the UN when certain missions were primarily led by former colonial powers, allowed these powers to maintain influence and control over former colonies' affairs indirectly. The UN peacekeeping missions have inadvertently promoted neocolonialism by enabling powerful nations to intervene in the affairs of weaker states under the guise of peacekeeping, which has led to prolonged presence and intervention that serves the interests of the interveners more than the local populations. The power dynamics within the UN Security Council and the influence wielded by its permanent members have led to decisions that do not prioritize the best interests of the nations. Peacekeeping practices, while allegedly granting security, resulted in an array of uneven political results, including corruption, inequality, ethno-nationalist divisions, racism, private military companies, illegal natural resource mining companies and anti-communist / anti-Soviet rhetoric, as well as the denial of meaningful emancipation.

References / Библиографический список

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